Nutritional Status of Middle School Students and Their Selected Eating Behaviours

Authors : K. Larysz, E. Grochowska-Niedworok, M. Kardas, K. Brukalo, B. Calyniuk, R. Polaniak

Abstract : Eating behaviours and habits are one of the main factors affecting health. Abnormal nutritional status is a growing problem related to nutritional errors. The number of adolescents presenting excess body weight is also rising. The body's demand for all nutrients increases in the period of intensive development, i.e., during puberty. A varied, well-balanced diet and elimination of unhealthy habits are two of the key factors that contribute to the proper development of a young body. The aim of the study was to assess the nutritional status and selected eating behaviours/habits in adolescents attending middle school. An original questionnaire including 24 questions was conducted. A total of 401 correctly completed questionnaires were qualified for the assessment. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated. Furthermore, the frequency of breakfast consumption, the number of meals per day, types of snacks and sweetened beverages, as well as the frequency of consuming fruit and vegetables, dairy products and fast-foods were assessed. The obtained results were analysed statistically. The study showed that malnutrition was more of a problem than overweight or obesity among middle school students. More than 71% of middle school students have breakfast, whereas almost 30% of adolescents skip this meal. Up to 57.6% of respondents most often consume sweets at school. A total of 37% of adolescents consume sweetened beverages daily or almost every day. Most of the respondents consume an optimal number of meals daily. Only 24.7% of respondents consume fruit and vegetables more than once daily. The majority of respondents (49.40%) declared that they consumed fast food several times a month. Satisfactory frequency of consuming dairy products was reported by 32.7% of middle school students. Conclusions of our study: 1. Malnutrition is more of a problem than overweight or obesity among middle school students. They consume excessive amounts of sweets, sweetened beverages, and fast foods. 2. The consumption of fruit and vegetables was too low in the study group. The intake of dairy products was also low in some cases. 3. A statistically significant correlation was found between the frequency of fast food consumption and the intake of sweetened beverages. A low correlation was found between nutritional status and the number of meals per day. The number of meals consumed by these individuals decreased with increasing nutritional status.

Keywords : adolescent, malnutrition, nutrition, nutritional status, obesity

Conference Title : ICPH 2019 : International Conference on Public Health
Conference Location : Venice, Italy
Conference Dates : August 13-14, 2019